



# **INTEGRAL STUDY OF THE SILK ROADS: ROADS OF DIALOGUE**

21-22 JANUARY 1991

BANGKOK, THAILAND

---

Document No. 5

## **The Trade Route and the Diffusion of Artistic Traditions In South and Southeast Asia**

*Dr. Nandana Chutiwongs*

## TRADE ROUTE AND THE DIFFUSION OF ARTISTIC TRADITIONS IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Dr. Nandana Chutiwongs

The cultural history of most countries in South and Southeast Asia appears to have been closely linked to trade and trade routes. More and more evidence has been found to indicate that many communities in this part of the world were engaged in a network of commercial activities since the prehistoric time<sup>1</sup>. But it was apparently the increased demand by Rome and China for exotic and luxury goods that generated a great expansion of international trade around the beginning of the Christian era. While caravans were slowly plodding along the desolate land routes between India and China, ships profiting from the knowledge of the monsoons made regular courses from many ports on the Indian sub-continent to Southeast Asia and further east. Not only spices, aromatic woods, resins and the other well-known natural products of Southeast Asia were transported along these routes. Surveys and excavations at Mantai<sup>2</sup>, Oc-éo<sup>3</sup>, U-Thong<sup>4</sup>, Ban Don Taphet<sup>5</sup> and many sites in peninsular Thailand<sup>6</sup> have brought to light a large variety of objects originated from the Mediterranean world, India and China. These, together with the finds at Arikamedu<sup>7</sup> and the famous Begram hoard in Afghanistan<sup>8</sup>, bear witness to the diversity of the luxury products transported between Rome and China during the first centuries of the Christian era.

Many relay stations for caravans and ships, and trading centres for the acquisition and exchange of goods grew up, while the regions situated along the trade routes became partner in the international trade. Trade generated material gain and wealth that laid the economic basis for the developments of the communities, and the various centres of commerce flourished into centres of political powers and culture. The caravans and trading ships from the Indian sub-continent brought along to points further east many aspects of Indian culture, the benefit of which were realized by the elite of the new regions. The trade route had made

---

<sup>1</sup> For a recent study see Glover 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Prickett 1988; Carswell 1990; Silva 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Malleret 1959-1963.

<sup>4</sup> Boisselier 1968; 1972:28-37; Loofs 1979:12-48.

<sup>5</sup> Glover 1989:12-48.

<sup>6</sup> Srisuchart 1985. Veraprasert 1987.

<sup>7</sup> weeler, Ghosh and Deva 1946.

<sup>8</sup> Hackin, Hackin, Carl et Hamelin 1954.

possible the journey of Buddhist monks and Brahmins, motivated either by missionary zest or by the quest of fame and power. These priestly travelers introduced Indian religions, rituals of worship, concept of divine kingship together with the mythologies that glorify the gods and the rulers, Indian system of state organization, script and literature and the use of Sanskrit as the sacred language. Under these influences of Indian culture, the internal structure of the new societies underwent a great change and Indianised settlements and states grew up along the trade routes. The traffic of monks and Brahmins from the Indian sub-continent then became counterbalanced and eventually overbalanced by that of pilgrims and envoys from overseas. Religious concepts and the artistic traditions that had been instrumental to religions found their way into Southeast Asia along the same route that had brought merchants and economic gain<sup>9</sup>. Buddhism and Hinduism became the strongest spiritual forces, and the divine rulers. Material wealth, largely acquired through trade, generated an economic welfare which was further stabilized by agriculture. Trade and agricultural surplus supplied the necessary funding for the construction and maintenance of civil and religious edifices. Craftsmen, artistic and technological skills were required by the courts, religious institutions and other wealthy patrons. The community supplied man-power, paid or unpaid<sup>10</sup>, while the priests looked after the ritual procedure involved in the process. These combined efforts created and maintained the monuments of faiths, and set forth the religious traditions which gave spiritual felicity and solace to the entire community.

Influences of artistic traditions from the Indian sub-continent flowed into Southeast Asia largely through the sea route which served as the most convenient channel of communication in those days. Few written records from Southeast Asia provide relevant information as to the actual process of the diffusion of such traditions, but the existing monuments themselves bear indisputable testimonies of the introduction and assimilation of those foreign elements which must have taken place at one time or another.

The process of the transmission of cultural and artistic traditions evidently involved many types of agency and circumstance. Buddhism and Hinduism introduced their traditional architectural from the imagery. Chinese accounts contain many references to Buddhist monks

---

<sup>9</sup> For discussions on the Indianization of Southeast Asia see Coedes 1968; Van Leur 1955; Bosch 1961b; Wolters 1967; Wheatley 1983.

<sup>10</sup> For this subject see also Silva 1988:2-3.

from the Indian sub-continent who erected temples, shrines or images, presumably in their own, native style, in foreign countries<sup>11</sup>. The famous Gunavarman from Kasmir is also reputed to have painted with his own hands figures of arhats and other Buddhist themes in China<sup>12</sup>. Buddhanandi (Nan-té), a monk/sculptor and envoy from Sri Lanka, brought to the Chinese court a Buddha image of his own creation, which the Chinese described as an “incomparable” work and must have established a stylistic model for the 100 craftsmen<sup>13</sup>. Durgasvamin, a Brahmin from South India who married a daughter of the king of Cambodia, erected a Sivalinga in a temple at Sambor Prei Kuk in the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>14</sup>. The Brahmin, who assisted king Sanjaya to install the royal Sivalinga upon the mountain Gunung Wukir in 732 A.D., may also have come from South India<sup>15</sup>. Guru Kumaraghosa from Gaudi (West Bengal), the preceptor of the Sailendre king of Java, who, according to the 782 A.D. Kelurak inscription, set up and consecrated an image of Manjusri<sup>16</sup>, could have been involved in the foundation of the shrine which sheltered it<sup>17</sup>. There must have been more of such cases, record and unrecorded, through the centuries; It may well be expected of learned Indian priests, both Buddhist and Hindu, to have been competent in directing the construction of shrines and supervising the making of icons which were essential to their teaching and ritual of worship. Besides Gunavarman and Buddhanandi, many other Buddhist monk/architects and monk/artists are mentioned in Chinese records<sup>18</sup>. Eminent Brahmins, too, were probably well-versed in art and architecture, According to Indian tradition; it was the “sthapaka” (architect-priest) who took the leading role in the planning and setting up of religious structures<sup>19</sup>. Indian Brahmins and monks who are known from literary and epigraphical records to have held high functions at the many Southeast Asian courts<sup>20</sup>, must have contributed to the diffusion of their own art traditions in the new countries.

Professional artists are also known to have travelled. Many were commissioned to work in foreign countries by kings, religious institutions and other wealthy patrons. Some even stayed on in the new countries where their arts were highly appreciated. Dhiman and his

<sup>11</sup> See Soper 1949:28-30,34; 1959:5,6,43,80-82,85,106,109.

<sup>12</sup> Soper 1959:43.

<sup>13</sup> Senaviratna 1917:108; Soper 1959:96~ Silva 1988:226.

<sup>14</sup> See Coedes 1937-1966, vol.IV:27.

<sup>15</sup> For different readings and interpretations of this inscription see Krom 1931:123-126; Coedes 1968:87-88; Sarkar 1971:15-24.

<sup>16</sup> See Bosch 1929; Sarkar 1971:41-48.

<sup>17</sup> This might have been Candi Lumbung as suggested by Prof. de Casparis; see De Casparis 1950:105.

<sup>18</sup> Soper 1949:28,29, 33,34; 1959:18,43,80-82,85.

<sup>19</sup> Shukla 1961:44-49.

<sup>20</sup> Coedes 1968:52, 58,60, and notes 15 and 16.

son Bitpala, two famous artists from North India, are believed to have worked in Tibet during the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries, when they established a school of sculptors trained in their native style<sup>21</sup>. Artists and artisans from India and Central Asia were in great demand in Tibet and China<sup>22</sup>. Buddhanandi, the monk/sculptor from Sri Lanka, introduced the Sinhalese mode of making Buddha image to the enthusiastic Chinese court<sup>23</sup> and probably assisted court artisans to work in the style of artisans to work in that style while he was in China during the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Aniko from Nepal led a group of artisans to work for Kublai Khan in Tibet, and later on in China where he obtained a high function as controller of the imperial workshop and trained the local artists in his own tradition<sup>24</sup>. Sinhalese craftsmen obviously took part in the restoration of Wat Mahathat at Sukhothai during the early 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>25</sup>. The 'master-smith Suryya', whose name appears on a bronze image from Tapanuli in West Sumatra<sup>26</sup>, may have been an Indian from the Tamil country working in Indonesia during the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These instances record a practice which was apparently common in the old days.

The transportation of artisans as prisoners of war from one country to another is also another fact recorded in historical documents<sup>27</sup>.

Works of art and religious objects were also transported along the same routes used by merchants, missionaries, pilgrims, artisans and envoys. Foreign works of art, distinguished for their beauty and aesthetic attractions, were among luxury objects greatly in demand by wealthy buyers. The pieces which had been highly estimated in the countries of destination were likely to be copied by local artisans, and could even have inspired new artistic modes. Icons and architectural models accompanied missionary's pilgrims to and from their countries of origin<sup>28</sup>, and often formed part of the royal gifts presented by one court to another<sup>29</sup>. Many of these images and architectural models are recorded to have been copies of famous icons and edifices in the Indian subcontinent<sup>30</sup>, or replicas or even originals of sacred objects from elsewhere<sup>31</sup>. They were often received with high esteem in the new countries where more copies of them were produced. Making replicas of famous images, edifices and sites has been

---

<sup>21</sup> Tucci 1973:139.

<sup>22</sup> Soper 1959:81-82,121,170; Tucci 1973:139-141; Bussagli 1963:66-67.

<sup>23</sup> See note 13.

<sup>24</sup> See Von Schroeder 1981:504-505.

<sup>25</sup> See Griswold 1967:21. For this inscription see also Inscriptions of Sukhothai Perlgd 1983: 58-79.

<sup>26</sup> See Bernet Kempers 1959:69, pl.197.

<sup>27</sup> For examples see Rowland 1947:5 note 2; Soper 1959:88-89; Harvey 1967:27-29, 168; Chutiwongs 1984: 101.

<sup>28</sup> See Soper 1949:31-32; 1959:29,53; Rowland 1947:7; Bagchi 1950:157-158; also Woodward 1988:75-91.

<sup>29</sup> See Soper 1959:29,40,54,70,74-76,86,90.

<sup>30</sup> See Soper 1959:1,9-12, 22-24, 28,30-32, 40,47.

<sup>31</sup> Soper 1959:47,53,54,58,59,64,74.

a common practice among the Buddhists and Hindus<sup>32</sup>. The intention is to reproduce the efficacious powers of the originals, and to translocate the sacred sites to be within reach. The so-called "sandal wood First Image", reputed to have been made during the life time of the Buddha, has been copied time and again in India and elsewhere, and replicas of the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya exist in many countries. Allusions to the translocation of Indian sacred rivers occur in one of the earliest Inscriptions of Java<sup>33</sup>.

Since the act of making replicas of sacred images or holy sites reproduces the sacredness and efficacious powers of the originals, the preciseness of the copying process was required. The characteristic appearance of the buildings and the iconographic details of the images should be as precisely reproduced as possible. The artisans thus learned to depict the foreign styles which probably exerted a certain degree of influence on his later works. Attempts to copy the foreign styles and to make faithful transcriptions of images and architectural models are well recorded in Chinese accounts, and are reflected in many artistic products of Southeast Asia. The earliest replicas usually bore a close resemblance to the imported models, although they inevitably betray certain traits of the local styles which have produced them<sup>34</sup>. A banner from Tun-huang<sup>35</sup> provides a good example of this kind of practice. It probably shows a series of famous Buddhist images worshipped in India, but the local artist, in copying the Indian style, expressed in each and every figure certain stylistic features characteristic of the local workshop. The products, on the other hand, heralded the emergence of a new style based on a mixture of Indian and indigenous traditions.

Besides models of sacred images and edifices, handbooks and treatises containing instructions for artisans must also have found their way into the far countries together with other types of Buddhist and Hindu literature. Sacred texts have always been much coveted by pilgrims and envoys on religious mission. An astounding array of Buddhist texts circulated in China, and references to Buddhist and Hindu treatises which could have given guide-lines to local architects and image-makers, frequently occur in Cambodian epigraphy<sup>36</sup>. Large bulks of such works, written in Sanskrit and in Pali, appear to have been known in Burma<sup>37</sup>. Several

---

<sup>32</sup> For example see coedes 1925:97-100; Soper 1959:88,261-265.

<sup>33</sup> Chhabra 1965:96-97.

<sup>34</sup> See Rowland 1947; Griswold 1966.

<sup>35</sup> Rowland 1947:8-18.

<sup>36</sup> For examples see Bhattacharya 1961:46-50.

<sup>37</sup> For examples see Ray 1936, 31-39.

hundreds of Indian texts were taken by I-Tsing to China via Srivijaya<sup>38</sup>. The narrative reliefs at the Boro Budur in Java were evidently based on many important texts,<sup>39</sup> and a number of Buddhist and Hindu works on philosophy and ritual remain preserved in Bali till the present day<sup>40</sup>. Artisans, following textual instructions, were apparently able to produce ichnographically correct depictions of the religious themes without having to study tangible models. New themes could thus be expressed in local idioms; and even new forms could have evolved as a result of the local interpretations of the imported texts.

There also exist records of images having been made after the descriptions supplied by missionaries or pilgrims who had seen the originals<sup>41</sup>. Besides tangible souvenirs collected at the sites, pilgrims and travelers undoubtedly carried home memories and impressions. Recollection of paintings, sculptures, buildings and sites which had appealed to them spiritually or aesthetically could serve as guide-line for the reproductions in concrete forms of what the travelers had seen on foreign soil.

Through various agencies and circumstances, many art styles based on the religious and artistic traditions of India and Sri Lanka grew up in Southeast Asia. Diverse streams of influences from abroad were received; absorbed, adapted to the environment, combined and eventually harmonized with local elements. The imported religions and the arts that they inspired became localized. Artisans, working for the new religions and depicting new themes, first imitated the imported styles but gradually modified these to suit the local taste and requirement. New styles then emerged, each showing juxtapositions and mixtures of many artistic traditions, variant in time and provenance, but harmoniously blended into a perfect unity. Each style displayed its own historical, geographical and cultural milieu. The trade route continued to function as communication route and brought about more cultural contacts. New centres of religions and arts arose, new lots of priests, pilgrims, envoys and artisans travelled to and fro, carrying with them new philosophical ideas and artistic trends.

The networks of trade and cultural exchange extended over the entire region of South and Southeast Asia, and the phenomena of borrowing and assimilating of cultural elements occurred through the centuries. India remained the principal fountain-head of the Buddhist and Hindu culture till the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century when Buddhism suffered a severe persecution. The Hindu culture, nevertheless, retained its forces in South India thereafter. Sri

---

<sup>38</sup> I-tsing xxxiii.

<sup>39</sup> Bernet Kempers 1976:87-136.

<sup>40</sup> See Bosch 1961a; Soebadto 1971.

<sup>41</sup> Soper 1959:18, 32.

Lanka, which had been a stronghold of Buddhism, continued to be the most important centre of that religion after it had lost its ground in India, giving much inspiration to Burma, Thailand and Cambodia. When Buddhism in Sri Lanka suffered a set-back due to foreign occupation, Burma in the 11<sup>th</sup> century became an asylum for the dispersed Sinhalese monks and assisted them to re-establish the religion in the island<sup>42</sup>. Thailand in the 18<sup>th</sup> century sent ecclesiastical help for the same purpose<sup>43</sup>, and the religion of the Buddha prospers in Sri Lanka to the present day.

Indonesia in the 7<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries was renowned for its Buddhist Mahayana learnings. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century, pre-eminent Buddhists from Campa went to Yavadvipapura (Java) for pilgrimage and for the acquisition of spiritual powers<sup>44</sup>. Cambodia in the same century could have obtained many sacred Buddhist texts from the same place<sup>45</sup>. Campa in the 9<sup>th</sup> century exerted a cultural and religious influence on peninsular Thailand<sup>46</sup>, and possibly also on Yunnan in South China<sup>47</sup>. Burma flourished as a great centre of Buddhist studies and Buddhist art during the 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and Thailand assumed a similar role from about the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

A few art forms have been selected to illustrate the consequences of the diffusion of artistic traditions in South and Southeast Asia:

## **STUPA**

Stupa, the most representative of all Buddhist monuments, has a wide distribution throughout Asia. Functionally, it is the monument built to contain the corporeal relics of the Buddha. Symbolically, it stands for Nirvana, the Buddhist Salvation; and may be regarded as the cosmic axis containing the nucleus of the eternal and all-redeeming powers of the Buddha.

---

<sup>42</sup> See Gunawardana 1979:271-274; Sirisena 1978: 59-64.

<sup>43</sup> Dewaraja 1988:114-118.

<sup>44</sup> Huber 1911:303,310; Chutiwongs 1984:429

<sup>45</sup> Coedes 1937-1966, vol.VI:104-105; Chutiwongs 1984:428-429.

<sup>46</sup> Diskul 1980.

<sup>47</sup> Chutiwongs 1984:477-480.



The monuments at Sanci in North Central India (Plate), dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> -1<sup>st</sup> centuries B.C., exemplify the earliest known shape of the Buddhist stupa. This consists of a simple and solid hemispherical body, standing on a low base and crowned with a superstructure in the form of a balustrade raised around a pole that bears the parasols of honor.

Sri Lanka showed a special favor for a similarly simple form, but increased the dimension of the monument and placed it upon a spacious square platform supported by a row of elephant-caryatids. Four decorated altar-like structures were added around the body facing the four directions. The genesis of these structural and decorative elements goes back to India, but it was in Sri Lanka that they were combined into such a unity in response to the Sinhalese own sense of aesthetics and philosophical concepts. The Ruvanveli at Anuradhapura (Plate), the founding of which began in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., typifies the type which has been applied the major stupas in Sri Lanka through the centuries. Such as combination of Stupa and terrace with elephant-caryatid, inspired the design of a number of monuments in 14th-16th century Thailand<sup>48</sup>. The distinctively ponderous hemispherical shape was also reproduced in Thailand in the 14th Century<sup>49</sup>, and in Burma in the 17th and 19th centuries<sup>50</sup>. The phenomenon of stupa sheltered within a shrine, which existed in rock-cut forms in India, attained its zenith of development Sri Lanka, as is represented by the Vatadage at Polonnaruwa (Plate), dating from the 12th century. Simplified versions of such continued to be built till the present day. The Vijayotpala at Gadaladeniya (Plate) presents a 14<sup>th</sup> century example of an architectural type which also occurred at Sukhothai<sup>51</sup> and probably also in Cambodia<sup>52</sup>. The stupa itself has a bell-shaped body, standing on a low base equipped with triple mouldings. This form is common to small sized stupas of Sri Lanka.

The Boro Budur in Central Java (Plate) may be regarded as a highly developed and complex type of stupa. It consists of terraces, stupas and sculptures systematically arranged into a diagram of the cosmos, centralized around a stupa which stands for the nucleus of the entire world-system. Vertically, the monument evokes the image of the cosmic mountain, the axis of the world, around which clings the world of Name and form consisting of different

---

<sup>48</sup> For examples see Charoenwongsa and Diskul 1976:pls.168,217.

<sup>49</sup> See Charoenwongsa and Diskul 1976:pl.191.

<sup>50</sup> See Aung Thaw 1972:131,146.

<sup>51</sup> See Charoenwongsa and Diskul 1976:pl.182.

<sup>52</sup> See Boisselier 1966:94; Chutiwongs 1984:1312.

levels of existence, mundane and divine. Above these spheres of Name and Form, and crowning the entire world-structure, stands a stupa, the symbol of Salvation<sup>53</sup>. Building types which could have inspired the structural form of the Boro Budur are known from North India<sup>54</sup>, and parallels to it existed in Nepal<sup>55</sup>, Tibet<sup>56</sup> and Burma (Plate), but nowhere else had the design been as elaborate and as well-conceived as at the Boro Budur. According to some scholars, the structural plan of this monument may well have inspired the construction of the first temple-mountain of Cambodia<sup>57</sup>. Looking into the details of the Boro Budur, two Major forms of stupa can be distinguished (Plate). One is pot-shaped and is frequently adorned with a garland or decorative band around the body. The other is bell-shaped, displaying an undecorated body and a low or lotus base above which were carved two or three concentric lines suggesting mouldings. The first type was evidently based on North-east Indian prototypes, while the other recalls the most common form of the smaller types of Sri Lankan stupas.

Burma in the classical Pagan period from the 11th - 13th centuries also showed a strong favour for erecting important stupas upon a stepped pyramidal base. The type is exemplified by the Shwehsandaw (Plate) of the 11th century, the Shwezigon of the 12th century, and the Mingalazedi of the 13th century. The Shwehsandaw consists of a single stupa standing on five receding square terraces, each with a flight of steps leading the way up to the top from four directions. No elaborately carved gateways or sculptured balustrades adorn these terraces. The basic plan is similar to that of the Boro Budur, but lacking almost entirely all the subsidiary elements and the wealth of sculptures that embellish that Javanese edifice. The antecedents of this type of structure can be found in India<sup>58</sup>, but this particular design appears to have gone through an independent course of evolution in Mainland Southeast Asia since the 8th century. The form of the stupa itself also shows a local adaptation of more than one Indian prototypes. The cylindrical shape of the body appears to have its origin in the style of the Andhra country in Southeast India the influences of which became evident in the art of Burma since the 6th century. The decorated band around the stupa body is probably an element which Pagan itself had borrowed from the medieval style of Northeast India. The smoothly tapering superstructure represents the typically Burmese modification of the

---

<sup>53</sup> For the most recent summing up and a critical survey of theories and hypotheses on the meaning of the Barabudur see De Caspris 1990.

<sup>54</sup> Van Lohuizende Leeuw 1956:279-290; Coomaraswamy 1968:205.

<sup>55</sup> Wiesner 1980:pls.3,5,7,9.

<sup>56</sup> Tucci 1973:pls. 75,78-81,83,84,89-98.

<sup>57</sup> Groslier 1962:99-101; Loofs-Wissowa 1986:239-254.

<sup>58</sup> See note 54.

traditional forms known in India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere. It remains characteristic of Burmese stupas till the present day, recent examples, such as the Shwedagon at Rangoon (Plate), are remarkable for their heavily sloping shape which is formed by a broad base, attenuated body and pointed pinnacle. The three components appear to be merging and receding into one another, giving the entire mass a smooth and sweeping profile.

Thailand had known many types of stupa, as is especially evidenced from archaeological remains of the Dvaravati period<sup>59</sup>, but was still experimenting with various forms until the 14th century when a completely new formula emerged. The so-called 'lotus-bud' stupa (Plate), an invention of 14th century Sukhothai, appears to have been an amalgam of many types of monuments known to the architects at that time. It consists of a series of superimposing terraces, and a tall body which is a solidified version of an image-shrine standing on its own plinth and crowned with a stupa-like element complete with tapering pinnacle. The main stupa of Wat Mahathat at Sukhothai (Plate) belongs to this type. Standing on a tall, elevated base, it towers over all the subsidiary buildings which are evidence of the large variety of architectural forms constructed at Sukho-thai during the 13th - 15th centuries. This new form went out of fashion after the Sukhothai period, and it was the simple bell-shaped type of stupa introduced from Sri Lanka that eventually became the most favorite model among the Thais. The formula, however, had been gradually but steadily modified to suit the Thai taste (Plate). The base became taller, showing multiple receding steps. The body assumed a slender and elongated form while the superstructure soared up elegantly to end in a sharply pointed finial. Rich decorative patterns may cover the structure from top to base in the cases of recent examples. In spite of the smoothly sloping silhouette of the entire form, each of its structural parts usually retains its individual identity. In comparison with Burmese stupas, the comparatively narrow base, elongated body and needle-like pinnacle of the Thai edifices invoke a higher degree of verticality, loftiness and weightlessness.

## TEMPLE

The chapel or hall of worship of the Buddhists and Hindus may have variant forms. The type which was specially designed to be presided by an image or images was originally

---

<sup>59</sup> See Charoenwongsa and Diskul 1976:pls.15,16,36; Griswold 1960:fig.1.

conceived as a private chamber for the Buddha or for the gods. The earliest image-shrine found in Sri Lanka displays a design which recalls one of the oldest types of free-standing temple known in India, datable to the early 5th century<sup>60</sup>. The plan, however, was quickly modified in response to the Sinhalese mode of worship. The dimension increased probably to accommodate ritual gatherings typical of Theravada Buddhism, and a side staircase appeared (Plate) possibly to function as exit for worshippers<sup>61</sup>. The image-shrines of the early Anuradhapura period probably had a timber roof resting on brick walls and stone columns. Image-shrines with vaulted brick roof began to appear around the 8th century<sup>62</sup>, and continued to be built in the Polonnaruva period. The major examples of the 12th century, namely the Lankatilaka (Plate), Tivanka and ThuParama at Polonnaruva, display in their ground plan structural form and decorative themes a close resemblance to Hindu shrines of the Cola period of Southeast India.

The earliest image-shrines of Southeast Asia show strong affinities to the Indian styles of 6th - 7th centuries. Those found in ancient Cambodia are small structures of brick or sandstone, assignable to about 7th century (Plate). None of them appears to have been a copy of any known building in India, but they display in general many stylistic elements common to the Indian Gupta style of the 6th century and the Post-Gupta styles of the Indian peninsula of about the 7th century. The most favorite form in Cambodia was that of a square cellar crowned with a tower-roof (Plate), the structuring and decorative motifs of which reflect the ancient Indian concept of the temple as replica of the cosmic mountain, the centre of the universe. This form continued to develop locally, independent of the Indian influence, and the profile of the roof tended to look more and more like that of a pine-cone or a lotus-bud (Plate). Important temple were built upon terraced base (Plate), invoking all the more the image of the cosmic mountain, formed by diverse levels of existence and crowned with the residences of divinities and the supreme god. The local genius of Cambodia place long halls and galleries upon the terraces, and eventually linked them up with the towers to create a large and structurally harmonious unity. The 12th century temple of Angkor Wat, dedicated to Visnu, represents the culmination of this process and a unique achievement in the art of temple-building. Formed by an assemblage of towers, concentric galleries, porches and staircases, positioned on different levels but systematically and ingeniously joined, the monument has

---

<sup>60</sup> See Silva 1988:236-237, fig.39(5),

<sup>61</sup> See Bandaranayake 1974:190-203, pls.XVI-XVIII, figs.65-68,70,73; Silva 1988: 237-238, p1.42(2), figs.39(3,9,10),44(7,9).

<sup>62</sup> See Bandaranayake 1974:203-209, figs.75-77; Silva 1988:238-240,pls.43(1), 47, figs.40(1,4 ,5),42,43(2),44(4).

acquired an impressive dimension and appearance that express in full the symbolical meaning of the Hindu temple. This masterpiece of architecture represents a local development of the fundamentally Indian form, expressing the originally Indian concept which had taken a firm root in Cambodia and became part and parcel of the Khmer culture. The complex of Bayon (Plate) exhibits a remarkable feature in the form of gigantic faces looking down from each of the towers. They represent the all-seeing faces of the highest entity in the Mahayana Buddhist concept - a symbolism which originated in India but had never found expression in architectural form. The Neak Pean (Plate) of the late 12th - 13th centuries is a unique architectural transcription of the ancient Buddhist concept on the cosmic lake Anavatapta, which could have been introduced into Cambodia from Sri Lanka. A legend, telling about the pilgrimage of a foreign 'Leper King' to the southern coast of Sri Lanka, still circulates in the island. It might record a historical fact dating back to the end of the 12th century<sup>63</sup>.

The oldest temples in Indonesia are represented by the group on the Dieng plateau, dedicated to Siva and datable to about the 8th-9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The architectural forms show close similarity to the types known in 6th-7th century India. Candi Ariuna and Puntadewa (Plate) are strongly reminiscent of the Pallava style of the Southeast coast, while Candi Bima (Plate) recalls the building tradition of Post-Gupta North India. The type that became most current in Indonesia again consists of a square cella crowned with a multistoried tower roof, which combination recalls the concept of the cosmic mountain. The trend of development of this fundamentally Indian form appears to have been quite different from that of Cambodia. In the style of the 8th-10th centuries, the temple body usually retained a box-like cubical form with both vertical and horizontal planes strongly emphasized, while the multistoried roof showed an outline resembling that of a pyramid (Plate). More cella was sometimes added so that the ground plan assumed the form of a Greek cross, as is observed at candi kalasan and the central shrine of Candi Sewu. The Buddhist Candi Sari and Plaosan (Plate) had a rectangular ground plan and 2 stores, which features recall a type of Sri Lankan image-house of the Anuradhapura period<sup>64</sup>. These Indonesian shrines, however, were built entirely of stone, showing a roof structure that is common in South India, but digressing from the Indian prototypes by the use of miniature stupas as ornaments. Candi Lara Jonggrang, dedicated to the Hindu Trimurti, carried on the process of local modification of imported elements. The central shrine (Plate) shelters a magnificent image of Siva and depictions of his divine retinue.

---

<sup>63</sup> See Chutiwongs 1984:81,319-320.

<sup>64</sup> See Silva 1988: fig. 39 (7).

The building is tall and impressive; displaying a clear emphasis is on the vertical planes which gives the structure an even more soaring appearance. Roof decoration consists largely of a curious motif which looks like a combination between a stupa and the so-called 'amalaka' typical of North Indian architecture.

The cella, together with its tower roof, tended to become more attenuated and taller in the 13th and 14th centuries. Candi Singasari (Plate) had 2 storeys, the lower one of which contained five cellas sheltering the images of Siva and his divine retinue. The upper cella is now empty and only half of its roof remains intact. The form of the superstructure must have been close to that of the 1369 A.D. temple at Panataran (Plate). This has a similarly attenuated and cubical body and a tall, towering pyramidal roof crowned with a squarish finial. The accent lies heavily on the vertical lines the cubical form, the sharp profile and the extraordinary slenderness of the entire building recall the general outline of an obelisk. Candi Sukuh of the 15th century (Plate), dedicated to the worship of Siva as mountain god, revealed a mixture of Indian and indigenous Indonesian elements. The main feature of the temple is a truncated pyramid, the form of which brings to mind that of prehistoric terraces of Indonesia. Linga, the symbol of Siva was worshipped in this shrine, but the inner court also contained a number of obelisk-shaped stone reminiscent of prehistoric menhirs.

New foreign elements are noticed at Candi Pari in East Java<sup>65</sup>. The monument which bears a date of 1371 A.D. on its lintel, displays in its massive appearance and decorative themes stylistic influences from Campa.

In Burma, the Burmese of the Pagan period combined two architectural types, namely stupa and image-shrine, and produced magnificent edifices such as the Nanda and the Thatbyinnu. The technique of radiating arch enabled the Burmese to build spacious buildings required by Theravada worship. The Nanda or Ananda (Plate) may be described either as a temple crowned with a stupa, or as a stupa standing on layers of a tunneled base which contains cellas, images and galleries for circumambulation. Buildings showing a similar amalgam of stupa and image-shrine existed in India<sup>66</sup>, but the ingenious process of

---

<sup>65</sup> See Krom 1923, vol.II:229-234.

<sup>66</sup> Mitra 1971:pls.91,92.

developing the formula into such a schematic, well-balanced and complex design was locally achieved. The cruciform ground plan may have been inspired by the five-cella type of shrines known in India and Indonesia, although the closest parallel appears to be found at Paharpur in East Bengal<sup>67</sup>. The Thatbyinnu of the late 12th century consists of a hollow image-shrine standing on two layers of tunneled bases and crowned by a solid stupa. The crowning element of the Nanda displays a blend between a stupa and a multistoried roof of Northeast Indian temples. In the case of the Thatbyinnu, the crowning element looks more like a stupa, having a smooth body but displaying, on the other hand, a squarish section typical of the tower roofs of Northeast India.

Thailand in the Sukhothai period showed a distinctive favour for spacious rectangular buildings with brick walls and a tiled timber roof. The interior consisted of a long nave which was often flanked by a pair of side aisles and two rows of columns that supported the roof. The Buddha image stands near the back wall of this combination of shrine and assembly hall. The plan is not unlike that of the early Buddhist Cai tya halls in India which had also been designed for large gatherings. The Thais applied the same design and architectural form to their chapter-houses, and this remains characteristic of these two types of building in Thailand to the present day. A similar design appears in the chapter-houses of the two principal monasteries in present day Sri Lanka. The formula may have been brought over from Thailand by the Sri Lankan or Thai monks who established the syama-Nikaya in Sri Lanka in the 18th century.

The Thai copy of the Mahibodhi Temple, built during the 15<sup>th</sup> century at Chiengmai (Plate), presents an architectural form which was based on that sacred model at Bodh Gaya, but sculptural decoration on the walls betray in their themes and stylistic details influences of the Sinhalese tradition of the Polonnaruva period.

This is but a superficial and limited survey of the archaeological evidence of the diffusion of the artistic traditions and cultural exchange among the countries geographically linked together by trade, and spiritually by faiths. Trade had been one of the greatest sources of the economic welfare which had laid the foundation for cultural developments. Trade and trade route had been like important arteries feeding the body which is the material receptacle of the transcendental mind. In this world of Name and Form, the spirit and the body are

---

<sup>67</sup> Mitra 1971:241-242.

closely correlated and interdependent. An episode from the life of Lord Buddha will tell us that if the body does not function well, the spirit can find no peace and concentration essential for its progress towards a higher goal.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aung Thaw

1972 Historical Sites in Burma, Rangoon.

Bagchi, P.C.

1950 India and China, A Thousand Years of Cultural Relations, 2nd .ed.,  
Bombay.

Bandaranayake, S.D.

1974 Sinhalese Monastic Architecture, Leiden.

Bernet Kempers, A.J.

1959 Ancient Indonesian Art, Amsterdam

1976 Ageless Borobudur, Wassenaar.

Bhattacharya, K.

1961 Les religions brahmaniques dans l'ancien Cambodge, Paris.

Boisselier, J.

1966 Le Cambodge, Paris.

1968 Nouvelles connaissances archéologiques de la ville d'U-thong, Bangkok.

1972 Travaux de la mission archéologique française en Thaïlande (juillet-novembre 1966),  
Arts Asiatiques, tome XXV, pp.27-90.

Bosch, F.D.K.

1929 De Inscriptie van Keloerak, Tijdschrift Bataviaasche Genootschap,  
D1.LXVIII, afl.1 en2, pp.1-56.

1961a Buddhist Data from Balinese Texts, Selected Studies in Indonesian  
Archaeology, The Hague.

1961b The Problem of the Hindu Colonization of Indonesia, Selected  
Studies in Indonesian Archaeology, The Hague.

Bussagli, M.

1963 Paintin of Central Asia, Treasures of Asia Series, Geneva.

Carswell, J.

1990 The Excavation of Mantai, Paper submitted to the International Seminar - Towards the Second Century of Archaeology in Sri Lanka, Colombo 7th-13th July 1990, in Ancient Ceylon, No.7, 1990, pp.17-28.

De Casparis, J.G.

1950 Inscripties uit de Cailendra-Tijd, Bandung.

1990 Recent Interpretations of the Borobudur, A critical survey, Paper submitted to the International Seminar - Towards the Second Century of Archaeology in Sri Lanka, Colombo 1990, Ancient Ceylon, No.7. pp.29-51. Charoenwongsa, P. and S.Diskul

1976 Thailande, Archaeologia Mundi, Geneve. Chhabra. B.Ch.

1965 Expansion of Indo-Aryan Culture during Pallava Rule (as evidenced by inscriptions), Delhi.

Chutiwongs, N.

1984 The Iconography of Avalokitesvara in Mainland South East Asia, Thesis, Leiden.

Coedes, G.

1925 Documents sur l'histoire politique et religieuse du Laos occidental, BEFEO, tome XXV, pp.1-203.

1937-1966 Inscriptions du Cambodge, 8 tomes, Hanoi et Paris.

1968 The Indianized States of Southeast Asia, Honolulu. Coomaraswamy, A.K.

1968 History of Indian and Indonesian Art, Dover ed., New York. Dewaraja, L.S.

1988 The Kandy Kingdom of Sri Lanka, 1707-1782, 2nd ed., Colombo. Diskul, S.

1980 Chedi at Wat Keo, Chaiya, Suratthani, JMBRAS, vol.53, pt.2, pp.1-4.

Glover, I. C.

1989 Early Trade between India and South East Asia, A Link in the Development of a World Trading System, Centre for South East Asian Studies, University of Hull, Occasional Papers no.16, Hull.

Griswold, A.B.

1960 The Arts of Thailand, Bloomington.

1966 Imported Images and the Nature of Copying in the Art of Siam, Essays offered to G.H. Luce, vol.II, Ascona, pp.37-73.

1967 Towards a History of Sukhodaya Art, Bangkok. Groslier, B.Ph.

1972 The Art of Indo-China, Art of the World Series. Baden-Baden.

Gunawardana,R.A.L.H.

1979 Robe and Plough, Tucson. Hackin, J., J.R.Hackin, J.Carl, P.Hamelin

1954 Nouvelles recherches archeologiques a Begram (ancienne Kapici), (1939-1940), Paris.

Harvey, G.E.

1967 History of Burma, new impression, London.

Huber, E.

1911 Etudes indochinoises, BEFEO, tome XI, 3-4, pp.259-311.

Inscriptions of Sukhothai Period (in Thai), published by the Fine Arts Department on the occasion of the 700th Anniversary Commemoration of Thai Script, Bangkok 1983.

I-tsing. A Record of the Buddhist Religion as practised in India and the Malay

Archipelago (A.D.671-695), translated by J.Takakusu, 2nd Indian. ed., New Delhi 1982.

Krom. N.J.

1923 Inleiding tot de Hindoe-Javaansche Kunst , 2 vols., The Hague.

1931 Hindoe-Javaansche Geschiedenis, 2nd rev.ed., The Hague.

Van Leur, J.C.

1955 Indonesian Trade and Society, Essays in Asian Social and Economic History, The Hague/Bandung.

Van Lohuizen - de Leeuw, J.E.

1956 South-East Asian Architecture and the Stupa of Nandangarh, Artibus Asiae, vol.19, pp.279-290.

Loofs, H.H.E.

1979 Problems of Continuity between the pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Periods in Central Thailand, with special reference to U-thong. Early South Asia, ed. by R.B. Smith and W.Watson, Oxford.

Loofs-Wissowa, H.

1986 The True and the Corbel Arch in Mainland Southeast Asian Monumental Architecture, Southeast Asia in the 9th to 14th Centuries, ed. By D.G. Marr and A.C. Milner, Singapore.

Luce, G.H.

1969-1970 Old Burma - Early Pagan, 3 vols., Ascona.

Malleret, L.

1959-1963 l'archéologie du delta du Mékong, 4 tomes, Paris.

Mitra, D.

1971 Buddhist Monuments, Calcutta.

Prickett, M.

1988 Sri Lanka's Foreign Trade before A.D.600: Archaeological Evidence, Asian Panorama, Essays in Asian History, Past and Present, Colombo.

Ray, N.R.

1936 Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma, Amsterdam.

Rowland Jr. B.

1947 Indian Images in Chinese Sculpture, Artibus Asiae, vo.X, no.1,pp. 5-20.

Sarkar, H.B.

1971 Corpus of the Inscriptions of Java, vol.I, Calcutta.

Senaveratne, J.M.

1917 Some notes on the Chinese References, JCBRAS, vol.24, pp.106-118.

Von Schroeder, U.

1981 Indo-Tibetan Bronze, Hongkong.

Shukla, D.N.

1961 Vastu-Sastra, vol.I, Hindu Science of Architecture (with special reference to Bhoja's Samarangana-Sutradhara), Chandigarh.

Silva, R.

1988 Religious Architecture in Early and Medieval Sri Lanka, Leiden.

1990 Mantai - the Great Imporium of Cosmas Indicopleustes, Paper presente at the Maritime Silk Route Seminar, Colombo. 12-14 December 1990.

Sirisena, W.M.

1978 Sri Lanka and South-East Asia, Leiden.

Soebadio, H.

1971 Jnanasiddhanta, Secret Lore of the Balinese Saiva-Priest, Thesis, Amsterdam.

Soekmono. R.

1982 Chandi in Central Java.Indonesia, Jakarta.

Soper, A.C.

1949 Literary evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China, Oriental Art, N.S., vol. II, no.1, pp.28-35.

1959 Literary evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China, Artibus Asiae Supplementum XIX, Ascona.

Srisuchart. T.

1985 The Early Historic Sites and Archaeological Remains in Southern Thailand, Workshop on Archaeological and Environmental Studies on Srivijaya, SPAFA Final Report, Bangkok 1985, pp.113-130.

Tucci, G.

1973 The Ancient Civilization of Transhimalaya, Archaeologia Mundi, London.

Veraprasert, M.

1987 Khlong Thom: an ancient bead manufacturing location and an ancient entrepot, Seminar in Prehistory of Southeast Asia, SPAFA Final Report 1987, pp.323- 331.

Wheatley, P.

1983 Nagara and Commandera: Origins of the Southeast Asian Urban Traditions, Chicago.

Wheeler, R.E.M., A. Ghosh and K.Deva

1946 Arikamedu: An Indo-Roman Trading- Station on the East Coast of India. Ancient India, No.2, July 1946, pp. 17-124.

Wiesner, U.

1980 Nepalese Votive Stupas of the Licchavi period: The empty niche, in The Stupa, Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance, ed. by A.L. Dallapiccola & S.Zingel-Avé Lallemand, Wiesbaden.

Wolters, O.W.

1967 Early Indonesian Commerce, A Study on the Origins of Srivijaya, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

1979 Studying Srivijaya, JMBRAS, vo.LII, pt.2, pp. 1-32.

1982 History, culture and Religion in Southeast Asian Perspectives, Singapore.

Woodward Jr., H.W.

1988 Southeast Asian Traces of the Buddhist Pilgrims, MUSE, Annual of The Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri-Columbia, vol.22, pp.75- 91.